DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 474 UD 033 265

AUTHOR	Ferguson, Dianne L.
TITLE	On Reconceptualizing Continuing Professional Development: A Framework for Planning. On Point...Brief Discussions of Critical Issues in Urban Education.
INSTITUTION	Education Development Center, Inc., Newton, MA.; Education Development Center, Newton, MA. National Inst. for Urban School Improvement.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	11p.
CONTRACT	H086C70005.
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text: <http://www.edc.org/urban> (in English and Spanish).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Improvement; *Educational Planning; Educational Practices; *Faculty Development; Models; Organizational Development; *Staff Development; Urban Education

ABSTRACT

If school improvement efforts are to succeed, it seems clear that institutions of higher education, school districts, and state education agencies must work together to create new strategies, incentives, and options that will promote educators' learning of the new practices and perspectives that will change the core of educational practice. The focus of staff development is to build the capacity of the organization, while the focus of professional development is to build the capacity of the individual, and thus the profession as a whole. Planning differentially for both staff and professional development requires simultaneous attention to the learning outcome desired, the size or complexity of the learning involved, and the formats best suited to achieving the learning outcome. (SLD)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 437 474

Brief discussions of critical issues in Urban Education

On Point...

On Reconceptualizing Continuing Professional Development:
A Framework for Planning

Dianne L. Ferguson

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR URBAN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

UD033265

Reconceptualizing Continuing Professional Development:

A Framework for Planning

Teachers' professional preparation, along with their working conditions, has been identified as fundamental to improving elementary and secondary education for the 21st Century (Darling-Hammond, 1997). A recent report by the National Center for Education Statistics (1997) reveals that many teachers are not adequately prepared for their teaching assignments even at initial licensure. This situation is worse in urban districts where significant numbers of teachers are not licensed, where even licensed teachers leave after a few years and where working conditions are often poor and deteriorating.

If our school improvement efforts are to succeed as durable fundamental changes in the "core of educational practice" (Elmore, 1996), then at least one lesson seems clear. Institutions of higher education, districts and state education agencies must create together the strategies, incentives, and options that will promote educators' learning of the new practices and perspectives that will generally change this core of practice. Meeting such a challenge requires reconceptualizing both staff and professional development.

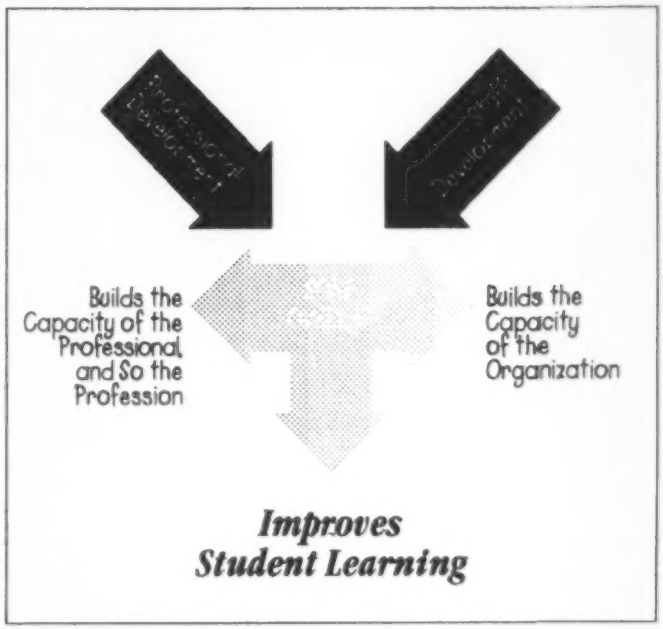
By a "core of educational practice," Elmore (1996)and others mean "how teachers understand the nature of knowledge and the student's role in learning, and how these ideas about knowledge and learning are manifested in teaching and classwork." Teachers must learn new ways to organize their schools and classrooms, new student grouping practices, and new approaches to learning that shift the relations between teachers and students. We must introduce teachers to ways in which they might share learning responsibility for groups of students. Finally, we must prepare teachers to explore new procedures for determining and documenting students' learning that can be communicated to the students, other teachers, parents, community members and administrators.

Why Distinguish *Staff* and *Professional* Development?

Achieving new approaches for in-depth teacher learning first requires a distinction between staff development in schools and teacher professional development. Although there is certainly some overlap, it is useful to locate the focus of ***staff development*** in building the capacity of the organization whereas the focus of ***professional development*** is to build the capacity of the individual professional, and so the profession as a whole. Understanding the nature of this overlap and using it to create and manage opportunities for both is critically necessary if urban schools are to respond successfully to the needs of both teachers and school organizations.

The distinction between staff and professional development is important for comprehensive and effective planning. All teachers in a particular organization may need, and be required to participate in, staff development as a condition of their employment in the school. Incentives are usually extrinsically held and acquisition of the targeted learning contingent upon sanctions imposed by the collective school faculty and staff. Most educators are familiar with those in any building who participate in school-wide staff development with reluctance and sometimes only when sanctions are used. The changes in teaching practice that result from staff development can be relatively small

because of, (1) the organizational focus of staff development, (2) the nature of incentives and sanctions typically available within schools, and (3) the time available and the amount and nature of learning that can be required. If everyone has to do it, the least common tolerance for learning and change among the organization's group of teachers tends to dominate.


Builds the Capacity of the Professional and So the Profession
Builds the Capacity of the Organization
Improves Student Learning

Since, by contrast, professional development focuses on the individual teacher, efforts can be directed toward those in any school who possess the intrinsic motivation for the in-depth and continual learning required for fundamental change in core educational practices. Limited resources can be differentially allocated to maximize both staff and professional development over time without creating a mismatch between motivation available and the size and importance of the learning required for any particular teacher. This kind of careful planning can address the learning needs of both schools and teachers in an integrated way that minimizes conflict and rewards innovation.

How Do You Plan for Both *Staff* and *Professional* Development in a School?

Planning differentially for both staff and professional development requires simultaneous attention to three considerations: (1) the learning outcome desired, (2) the size or complexity of the learning involved, and (3) the formats best suited to achieving the learning outcome.

CONSIDERATION 1:

Typical Staff/Professional Development Formats

The range and variety of formats for delivering either staff or professional development are fairly broad. Typically, however, both school districts and colleges/universities – the two most common initiators of staff and professional development – tend to rely upon a small number of these options. In fact, school districts tend to rely on the shorter formats and colleges/universities the longer ones. Options include the ubiquitous 1-2 hour, half-day or full-day workshop, or the multi-session conference at the short end of the time continuum. At the longer end are potions such as, full year course sequences, single courses, short multi-week courses, and ongoing teacher study groups.

Typical Staff and Professional Development Formats

- 1-2 hour workshop
- Half day workshop
- Multi-day workshop
- Multi-session conference
- 2-5 week mini course
- Recurring study groups
- Action research projects
- Quarter or semester couses
- Course sequence

CONSIDERATION 2:

Learning Outcome Sought

A substantial literature has concluded that longer time formats are needed for teachers, or indeed anyone, to achieve more in-depth and integrated learning. Shorter formats are simply too short (Darling-Hammond, 1997, Liberman, 1995). Most educators are aware of the limits of the "one-shot" inservice for achieving any substantial teacher learning, yet we tend to rely upon such formats despite their limitations.

Learning Outcome Sought

- Sharing information
- Skills Acquisition
- "Marketing"
- Conceptual/ Integrated learning

Alternatively, we *could* use shorter formats to "market" the need for more in-depth efforts. This

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

strategy might help generate the kind of intrinsic motivation needed to recruit more teachers into longer term learning efforts. Shorter formats can also be effective formats for disseminating information for either staff development or professional development. Information dissemination, however, rarely achieves the kind of skill development or conceptual and integrated learning required for fundamental changes in core teaching practices.

CONSIDERATION 3:

"Size" and Complexity of Learning Required

The most difficult considerations to integrate with the first two are the size and complexity of the learning task addressed. There are two ways that size and complexity matter. Learning how to use a new form for recording incidents or requesting peer support and problem-solving are examples of topics that are relatively discrete as well as small. Either might be addressed in a short format and both relate to staff development.

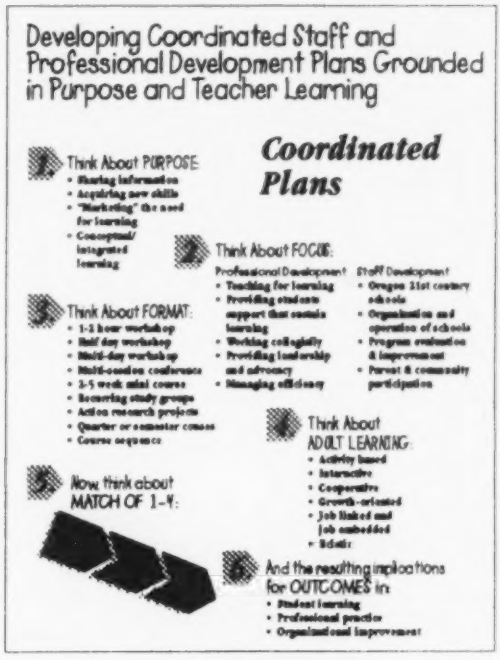

Developing Coordinated Staff and Professional Development Plans Grounded in Purpose and Teacher Learning
Coordinated Plans
Think About PURPOSE:
Think About FOCUS:
Professional Development
Staff Development
Think About FORMAT:
Think About ADULT LEARNING:
Now, think about MATCH OF 1-4:
And the resulting implications for OUTCOMES in:

Figure 1

Learning how to schedule and run student-led conferences or construct a student portfolio are also relatively small in size and could be addressed in a shorter format. However, integrating the use of such information and skill with other curriculum and teaching practices that are consistent requires a broader understanding of the theories and relationships among various student assessment practices. Similarly, learning and applying the theories of multiple intelligence, cooperative learning, constructivism, or direct instruction depends upon a command of not only the theories themselves, but also the relationship between various common practices and the theory.[7]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The larger or more complex the learning task, the more necessary it is to pursue such learning through longer, more in depth formats. One way to consider these 3 dimensions and efficiently plan both staff and professional development is depicted in Figure 1.

On Directionality and Ownership: Leveraging Organizational Change Through Job-Linked and Job-Embedded Professional Development.

One additional implication of the distinction between staff development and professional development is the ownership of the decision-making process and the direction from which those decisions emerge. Staff development, focusing on the collective capacity of the organization, requires collaborative decision-making and group commitment. Of course, staff development can be imposed. An administrator or administrative process can direct the delivery of teaching and information to a faculty/staff in order to increase the capacity of the organization. It's worth considering, however, that genuine *learning* is within the control of the individual. Transforming teaching into learning is essentially an individual decision and responsibility.

Professional development, drawing as it does upon individual motivation, must also be structured to maximize individual decision-making and responsibility. The following definition and principles, developed by teachers and teacher educators, can direct the planning process described here and assist planners to balance considerations of format, learning outcome, and learning demands for both staff and professional development.

> ***Continuing Professional Development (CPD)*** *is an educator-driven, flexible system where educators engage in planning learning experiences over time that result in better and better learning and life experiences for students and educators.*

Principle 1: Child & Youth Centered

The purpose of CPD for educators is ultimately to make a difference in the learning and lives of students. Any effective CPD system must keep this point in focus and help participants connect their learning to student outcomes.

Principle 2: Educator/Learner Focused

Effective CPD is about ***educators*** learning and exploring new ideas they can then apply in their own practice. The educator/learner must be "in charge" of designing their own CPD experiences in ways that benefit their own learning, application and reflection.

Principle 3: In-depth

Effective CPD creates the opportunity for educators to take the time needed to work extensively with new ideas and information. Only such in-depth learning can be adequately integrated into practice in ways that benefit both educators and students.

Principle 4: Continual

CPD never ends. Effective educators pursue learning and growth continually. CPD systems should be structured in a fashion so educators can periodically revisit and redesign those CPD experiences that support their continued growth.

Principle 5: Context Sensitive

Every educator's professional experiences are unique. CPD experiences should be designed in light of the particular educator's students, school, and district in order to be most effective and responsive.

Principle 6: Focused on Group Practice

Educators do not work alone. Increasingly, meeting the needs of urban children and youth requires groups of educators and others to design *together* effective learning. CPD should promote and provide experiences with this kind of interdependent group learning and purpose.

Principle 7: Research Oriented

The knowledge base of teaching and learning continues to grow and change as a result of the efforts of university-based and field-based educators and community members. Effective CPD should draw upon and in turn contributes to, this growing knowledge base.

Principle 8: Use of Panel-Validated Self-Assessment

Assessment of the results of CPD should be vested with the educator/learner. At appropriate times, the educator collects evidence of the effect of continuing professional development, which is then validated by "friendly critics" representing a broader constituency of professionals and consumers. Effects of CPD experiences should be related to student learning, teaching practice and growth in organizational capacity.

References:

Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *Doing what matters most: Investing in quality teaching.* New York: National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

Elmore, R.F. (1996). Getting to scale with good educational practice. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 1-26.

National Center for Education Statistics (1998). *Fast Response Survey System: Teacher Survey on Professional Development and Training.* Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Education.

Liberman, A. (1995). Practices that support teacher development. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(8), 591-596.

On Points may be reproduced for broad dissemination and can be accessed in English or Spanish on the National Institute's Web site at: http://www.edc.org/urban.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
URBAN SCHOOL
IMPROVEMENT

Center for Program Improvement
University of Colorado at Denver
1380 Lawrence Street, 6th Floor
Denver, CO 80202
Tel: (303) 556-3990
Fax: (303) 556-6142
TTY or TDD: (800) 659-2656

Center for Research Synthesis and
Product Development
University of Oregon
1235 University of Oregon
Eugene, OR 97403-1235
Tel: (541) 346-2888
Fax: (541) 346-2471
TTY: (541) 346-2487

Center for Marketing,
Networking, and Utilization
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02458
Tel: (617) 969-7100, ext. 2105
Fax: (617) 969-3440
TTY: (617) 964-5448

E-mail: niusi@edc.org
http://www.edc.org/urban

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. Award No. H086C70005.